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CELEBRATE EARTH DAY THE FIRST 5 WAY
Tips to help teach children to live 'green' at an early age

(Sacramento) – In honor of Earth Day, First 5 California is encouraging parents and caregivers to teach young children how to live “green” to help ensure a healthier future for them and the planet. Leaders from First 5 California note that many environmentally-friendly choices have added benefits, such as encouraging physical activity, eating fresh fruits and vegetables, and creating safer, toxin-free environments.

“By teaching our children to protect the environment, we are not only teaching them to make simple, everyday choices for taking care of the planet, we’re also ensuring they have the best chance to reach their full potential,” said Kris Perry, First 5 California executive director and childhood development expert. “Taking steps to reduce our contribution to global warming will also help improve our children’s overall health and well-being.”

Perry offers families the following “Top 10” green tips to teach children to care for both their health and the health of the planet:

- 1) **No Gushing While Brushing:** Teach children to turn off the water while brushing their teeth during the two-minute brushing time dentists recommend.
- 2) **Walk The Walk:** Instead of taking the car, walk! By walking, you will not only help cut down on pollution, but provide good exercise for you and your family.
- 3) **Fresh Is Best:** Go to a farmers market and teach your preschooler how to choose local seasonal produce for healthy snacks. A farmers market is eco-friendly because it offers fresh produce that has not traveled a long distance and isn't wrapped in a lot of packaging. Don't forget to bring a reusable bag to carry your groceries home!
- 4) **Lights Out:** Tell children to turn off the lights when leaving a room and help them open curtains and blinds to let in the sun's natural lighting during the day. Switching off lights helps conserve energy – and lower your home energy bill.

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- 5) **Recycle Over and Over:** Teach your kids the value of recycling – newspapers, magazines and junk mail are just a start. You can even turn this into a fun activity like creating a newspaper and magazine photo collage.
- 6) **Green Thumb, Here We Come:** Most kids love to play in the dirt. Turn this into a fun gardening experience to grow plants and herbs – all it takes is a small plant container or empty egg carton. As an extra bonus, indoor plants help clean the air in your home.
- 7) **Take a Hike:** Play as a family outdoors. Throw a ball around or play tag instead of playing with electronic toys.
- 8) **Think Artsy:** Bring to life the artist in you and make crafts from objects you were planning to throw away. Make homemade wooden toys or create new outfits for your child's dolls from old clothes and linens.
- 9) **Give Bottled Water the Boot:** It is important for kids to drink plenty of water every day. To cut down on trash, refrain from buying bottled water. Instead, show your child how to fill up reusable bottles and thermoses with filtered tap water.
- 10) **Turn Household Chores Into Playtime:** Kids are natural scientists and love experimenting with things, so show them how to mix baking soda and vinegar to create a natural cleanser for your home. Not only will you replace unhealthy household toxins found in traditional cleaning supplies, you will turn a household chore into a fun activity for your child.

For more information on First 5 California and early childhood development programs, please visit www.first5california.com.

ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5.

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